

FASTING IN THE LIFE OF RUSSIANS

(19th–20th CENTURIES)

Tatjana VORONINA

Department of Russian Ethnology, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences
Leninsky prospect, 32a, Moscow 119 334, Russia

Abstract: In the 19th century the traditional diet of the Russians was a wholesome and stable complex of nutrition which included fast days set apart for partial or complete abstinence from food during a calendar year. Fast days were set by the regulations of the Orthodox Church and were linked with the major Christian feasts, church events and remembrance days of the Saints.

In practice all days of the year were divided into the days of abstinence from meat and dairy products when vegetable food only was allowed (*govenije* – “fasting”), and the days when their use was not restricted (*mjasoed* – “time when it is allowed to eat meat”). To give a clear idea of the place fasting occupied in the life of the people it is enough to say that more than 200 out of the 365 calendar days, i.e., the greater part of the year, were set apart as fasting periods of one or many days. The food taken on fast days had both some general and locally specific features. The urban diet differed from the rural; festive food had its specifics compared to the daily diet; the nutrition of wealthy peasants was more diverse than that of the poor. The importance of fast days lay not only in their restricting the diet to certain sets of food products, they served also to consolidate the norms of morality, to foster positive qualities and the like. Fasting habits and customs were passed down from one generation to the next, and thus carried a great educational content.

It is important to compare the practice of fasting in the 20th century during the atheistic propaganda and after 1988, the year of the millennium of Christianity in Russia. Thus the fasts can reveal the characteristics of the religious mood of Russian society in the past and the present. Thanks to a considerable mass of archival and field materials, as well as published sources, it is possible to demonstrate the great role of fast days in the life of the Russian people.

Keywords: religion, Russian Orthodox Church, food, fasting, moral aspects

INTRODUCTION

Food remains an important and stable element of any contemporary culture that preserves traditional features and ethnic specifics. From an ethnological point of view the study of a traditional nutrition as a phenomenon of everyday culture is connected with many aspects of life that reflect the relations between people, the norms and forms of their behaviour that are common for a particular society. Frequently they have confessional aspects that require a study of a variety of rules, restrictions and rituals concerning

both the composition of the food ration and behaviour. The most obvious manifestations of such restrictions are constant or temporary prohibitions (fasts, taboo) on particular food products and also fasts that include some other bans.

The investigation of fasting is of great importance for determining the national features of any ethnos connected with its faith and the level of religiosity at different points of time. The practice of fasting in Russia has a long history: since the adoption of Christianity (988) Russians began fasting in accordance with the canons of the Greek Orthodox Church which have remained unchanged right up to the present. Fasting also means that people have to attend church more often, to confess and receive communion. Sometimes the state introduced regulations to help the Church to control it. For instance, the Russian tsar Peter the Great introduced a decree in 1706 to impose a fine on persons who did not confess and take communion. Later, in 1772 during the rule of Catherine II a new regulation made it compulsory for people, including children beginning from 7 years old, to confess every year. Public penance was imposed on anyone who failed to do so.

Fast days were set by the regulations of the Russian Orthodox Church and were linked with the major Christian feasts, Church events and the remembrance days of the Saints.

To get a better idea of the significant role that fasts always played in the folk life of Russians, it is sufficient to point out the fact that fasts lasting for many days and one-day fasts accounted for more than 200 days, that is, for the greater part of the year. The Russian Orthodox Church still follows the Julian calendar that is one of the characteristic features of contemporary practice. This is why all the dates in the church calendar are indicated according to the old – Julian calendar and contemporary – Gregorian calendar (we also gave two dates in the text).

There are four fasts lasting for many days but their duration and the level of strictness differ. The first fast (*Roždestvenskij* or *Filipovskij*) is devoted to St. Philip or to the Nativity of Jesus Christ (from November 15 / November 28 till December 24 / January 6). It is long and lasts 40 days.

The second fast is Lent (“Great Fast” or *Velikij post* in Russian): it is the strictest and longest fast, lasting seven weeks before Easter and the Holy Week – a total of 49 days. Because of its strictness the Church includes four weeks to prepare believers for the fast. The last week is called “Cheese Week” or *maslenica* (Shrovetide) because it is allowed to eat a lot of bliny and milk products, especially butter (in Russian *maslo*), but no meat products. The last Sunday has a special name – “Forgiven Sunday” – it means that people have to forgive everybody and they kiss each other as a sign of forgiveness.

The food allowance during Lent differs not only from other fasts but also by several prohibitions. Only boiled vegetarian dishes are allowed and meat, fish, milk, eggs, cheese, sour cream, animal and oil butter, fancy cakes, buns are forbidden. On Saturdays and Sundays it is allowed to eat dishes with oil butter (except Saturday of Holy Week) and to drink grape wine.

The first week of Lent is particularly strong, especially the first five days. It is allowed to eat not boiled and cold food without any oil and cold drinks. On Monday (“Clean Monday”) the most pious people do not eat and drink at all. On Monday they drink holy water (every Russian has such water after it was blessed in the church on Holy

Epiphany) or ordinary water, eat communion bread (*prosvira* or *prosfora*), bread and salt. On Wednesday it is allowed to eat bread and drink stewed fruit (compote). On Thursday one can eat bread and drink water. On Friday this strict ration is enriched by a special porridge (*kut'ja*) made from grains of wheat with honey and raisins or berries that is blessed in the church after liturgy. On Saturday and Sunday it is allowed to eat vegetarian dishes with oil.

It is allowed to eat fish only twice: on the Day of Annunciation of Our Virgin (March 25 / April 7) and on Palm Sunday (in Russian *Verbnoe Voskresen'e* because people have a branch of willow blessed instead of a palm branch). On Saturday before Palm Sunday – “Lazarus Sunday” fish caviar is allowed.

The Holy Week is close to the first week of Lent in its strictness. People try to abstain from hot meals and eat cold dishes. On Thursday the believers take communion, on Friday they eat nothing and prepare for the festival service and only after the service is it allowed to eat Easter cake and eggs that have been blessed.

The third fast is devoted to the Holy Apostles; its start depends on the date of Easter but it always ends on the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul the Apostles (June 29 / July 12) so the duration is always different – from eight days to six weeks. It is not as strict as Lent. In accordance with Church Statutes vegetable oil can be used every day but fish is allowed only on Saturdays and Sundays and more on special feasts.

The fourth fast is devoted to the Dormition of Our Virgin and it lasts 14 days (from August 1 / August 14 till August 14 / August 27). It is a strict fast but shorter than Lent. It is necessary to abstain from fish except on the day of Transfiguration (August 6 / August 19). Vegetable oil and wine is allowed on Saturdays and Sundays.

All these fasts have a special day before the beginning – *zagoven'e* – when people abstain from meat.

The following are one-day fasts:

1) on Christmas Eve (December 24 / January 6): people eat nothing but bread and water until the end of evening service or “until the first star in the sky” and only then they eat a special porridge *sočivo* made with wheat or barley with honey (now – rice with raisins);

2) on the Eve of the Epiphany or the Twelfth-Day (January 5 / January 18): people eat nothing but bread and water until the end of evening service with a special blessing of water or “till the water” and only then eat *sočivo*;

3) on the Feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist (August 29 / September 11): it is a strict fast but vegetable oil is allowed;

4) on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14 / September 27): it is a strict fast (eggs, fish, milk and meat products are forbidden but vegetable oil is allowed).

It is necessary to keep fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays every week except 1) Christmas-tide – a period from December 25 / January 7 till January 5 / 18; 2) the period from February 4 / 17 till February 9 / 22; 3) Shrovetide or *Maslenica*, “Cheese Week” – a week before the Lent; 4) a week after Easter (“Light Week”); 5) a week after the Day of St. Trinity.

In accordance with the Church Statute there is no fast on Christmas and Epiphany if they fall on Wednesday and Friday. Food with vegetable oil is allowed on Christmas Eve and on the Eve of the Epiphany, on the Feasts of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist, and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Fish is allowed on the Feasts of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple (February 2 / February 15), The Transfiguration of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (August 6 / August 19), the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos (August 15 / August 28), the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin (September 8 / September 21), the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God (October 1 / October 14), the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin in the Temple (November 21 / December 4), the Nativity of St. John, the Honourable and Glorious Prophet and Baptist of the Lord (June 24 / July 7), the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul the Apostles (June 29 / July 12) that are on Wednesday or Friday and also during the period from Easter Week (a week after Easter) till the Day of Saint Trinity.

In addition, Russians kept public fasts and individual fasts.

In contemporary ethnological research in Russia a study of religiosity in all its manifestations became possible with the lifting of the ideological bans that affected the humanities during the Soviet period (1917–1991).

The investigation of the practice of fasts is made in the frames of the problems of contemporary ethnology that studies a mass manifestation of the faith in historical perspective (GROMYKO 1999: 8–19).

THE MAIN AIMS AND TASKS OF THE RESEARCH

The study deals with the practice of fasting among ordinary people who follow the above-mentioned points of Church Statute that differ from those that are common in the monasteries. Besides service the monks never eat meat and on the whole the prohibitions of their food ration are stricter.

Food as an important component of material culture can be an ethnic determinant when we speak about the comparative study of the nutrition of different peoples. But when we investigate the character of the food allowance of one ethnic entity (in our case only Russian), the regional differences are of great value because it is these peculiarities that leave the essential traces on the culture of the entity as a whole.

The character of nutrition during fasts to a certain extent depended on the local peculiarities of agriculture connected with the geographical and climatic conditions that allowed cultivation of different cereals, fruits and vegetables. So it is important to show the regional differences in food allowance in the 19th century and to determine them in the nutrition in the 20th century.

An attempt will be made to demonstrate how the practice of fasting was typical and common among the majority of the population of Russian peasantry almost till the beginning of the 20th century. After the October Revolution in 1917 the society became an atheistic one and people hid their beliefs and fasted in secret.

It becomes more obvious that Russian society of the 20th century was studied insufficiently in the ethnological respect, while the past century was marked by many changes

in political, economic and cultural life. Research on the religious consciousness of the ethnos as one of the important components of ethnic self-consciousness of the Russian nation, in our opinion, can be very timely. Such a study extends to religious consciousness in the period when the Church and religion was persecuted by the ruling regime, as well as the development of religiosity recently when the persecution stopped. And the task of an ethnologist is not to study the policy of the government in the sphere of religion, but religiosity during the repressions: the loss of the Orthodox traditions by some people or preservation of the traditions by others.

This task includes the problem of fasts, under which are implied, mainly, restrictions in the usual food ration in particular periods and days of the Church calendar, accompanied by spiritually moral tasks. In the past decade it has become possible to raise the problems of the ethnological study of the Russian Orthodox fast in historical perspective.

The particularities of fasting in the first years of the new regime from 1917 and later decades have not yet been sufficiently studied. Here the following tasks are emphasized: how strictly the Church Statutes were observed among Russians and the statutes' principal prescriptions about fasting; what fasts were kept, who fasted, how fasting and work in the State institutions were correlated; how the authorities controlled or put obstacles in the way of fasting (agitation and propaganda against fasts).

The study also concerns the practice of fasting in the time of revival of Russian Orthodox Church activity at the end of the 20th century. Thus, one of the aims is to show the role of fasting as an index of the religiosity of the society.

The problem of studying fasts in Russia has been reflected in several works (VORONINA 1997: 85–95; 1999: 73–86).

SOURCES

The chronological limits of the work include a period from the 19th century, the subsequent Soviet period (1917–1991) and the 1990s that on the whole cover two ages. It is difficult to draw a line between them, but the 20th century is closed with the totalitarian atheistic regime and the study of the fasts in many ways gained a political aspect.

The variety of sources for studying the practice of fasting in the 19th century is quite rich and wide. The most accessible materials are those which provide precise information about the fasting practice and contain answers to the surveys by questionnaire carried out by different scientific societies. Among them the archive materials of the Russian Geographical Society, that was founded in the middle of the 19th century in St. Petersburg. They contain the answers to the questions of the program that was edited in 1848. The materials were partly edited in several issues of *Ethnographical collected works*.

A lot of information about fasting was obtained from the Ethnographical Bureau that was founded by Prince V. N. Tenišev in the 1890s in St. Petersburg. It contains the answers of the correspondents from the main provinces of the Russian Empire to the questions of the Program. After the death of V. N. Tenišev the materials of his Bureau were given to the Russian Museum. Now they are in the archives of the Russian Ethnographical Museum (hereafter: REM) in St. Petersburg (fond 7).

The materials of the archives gave a good opportunity to reconstruct the peculiarities of fasting practice among Russian peasants, the most numerous stratum of the society at that time, with many details in the context of their religious beliefs and traditional norms of behaviour.

The sources of the 20th century also include the materials of the archives but they do not include such extensive information about fasting as in the previous century.

The periodical press is also an important source but most of the issues contained atheistic propaganda against all manifestations of the faith, including fasts. This is obvious from their titles: *Ateist* (edited in 1922–1930), *Bezbožnik* (“Atheist”) (1925–1941), *Antireligioznik* (1926–1941) and many others. Their publication was closely connected with the establishment of the Unit of Atheists of the USSR (1925–1940).

In a situation when we do not have very much information about the practice of fasting in the 20th century, current field observations become the most important source in research on fasting as well. Interviews with the citizens of Moscow, Voronež, Vologda, Rjazan and other regions showed that during the Soviet period the tradition of fasting slackened but was not interrupted and was kept by adherents of the Orthodox faith.

During the research a Program was implemented to collect field materials on the theme “Orthodoxy and Russian Folk Culture” that included, for example, such questions as knowledge of the time of fasting, the attitude to fasting, what fasts are kept, what the informants know about the Church-established order of fasting, etc. The particularities of fasting during the long fasts such as Lent were taken into account. Fasting was considered in respect not only of the food allowance but also of behaviour during fasts.

THE PECULIARITIES OF FASTING IN THE 19th CENTURY

1. FASTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHURCH STATUTE

At the end of the 19th century the majority of the Russian population was still Orthodox, the greater part were peasants who continued to keep fasts lasting for many days and one-day fasts. In practice all days of the year were divided into the days of abstinence from meat, eggs and dairy products, sometimes fish, when only vegetable food was allowed (*govenie* – “fasting”), and the days when there was no restriction (*mjasoed* – “time when it is allowed to eat meat”). The peasants had fasts on Wednesdays and Fridays all year round except on the continuous weeks marked by the church calendar. Fasting introduced significant changes into the peasants’ life; it also concerned the type of meals they ate. Thus the fasts regulated the eating habits of the peasants on workdays and holidays. Without exaggeration we can say that the whole Russian traditional nutrition system was based on the alternation of fasting days and “meat days”.

The food taken on fast days had both some general and locally specific features. The urban diet differed from the rural; festive food had its specifics compared to the daily diet; the diet of wealthy peasants was more diverse than that of the poor.

The everyday behaviour of the Russian peasantry in the 19th century was controlled by the traditions, which were preserved by the public mentality and were based on a wide

complex of moral, religious and social ideas (GROMYKO 1986: 270). Thus deviations from the norms of behaviour were permitted only for serious reasons and their violation was condemned. That is why almost all the correspondents of Tenišev's Bureau noted that the fasts established by the Russian Orthodox Church were observed strictly and rigorously. It concerned first of all a spiritual condition and also the restrictions in the everyday food ration of the peasants. Consequently, fasts can be regarded as an important component of the spiritual and material culture of the Russian ethnos.

The nutrition of Russians was defined by the level of development of agriculture, which meant that the diet included a multitude of cereals and vegetable products. At the same time the natural and climatic conditions considerably influenced the character of nutrition in the different regions of Russia. The regional differences left significant traces on nutrition; the diet of the peasants differed remarkably in the Central, Northern and Southern zones of the country, also in Siberia and the Ural regions (LIPINSKAJA 1997: 354–397).

Accordingly, the rations during the fasts differed, keeping both the traits inherent to the Russian cuisine on the whole and the local peculiarities of the nutrition.

Since the peasants grew their own crops and vegetables, the keeping of fasts was much easier for the rural population. Bread was the main product during fasts, when the everyday meal included "black" or rye bread and also pies made from a mixture of rye and wheat flour. A variety of cereals could be used to make different kinds of porridge. Potatoes and carrots were cultivated in many provinces and were the main ingredients of *šči*, the traditional soup. A famous proverb "Šči and porridge is our meal" aptly characterized the national peculiarities of Russian cuisine. It is true that nobody managed without *ščee* and porridge but they were prepared in many ways.

It is quite natural that the food allowance depended on the seasons. The menu was the most abundant and diverse in autumn and at the beginning of winter when there were enough stocks of foodstuffs after gathering the last harvest. A lack of them began in spring. Then the ration of a poor family was reduced to a minimum: rye bread, water, kvass, salted products (cucumbers, cabbage, wild mushrooms), potatoes, cereals. It became the most meagre in summer when the stocks ran out. The menu of the fasting table depended of course on the degree of prosperity of the peasants. Festive food that was prepared during fasts differed from everyday food and was more diverse. In Tver province when fasts fell on holidays, instead of bread there were rye pies and various dishes cooked with wild mushrooms (LEBEDEV 1853: 183–184). However, there was no exclusion during these days for guests who kept fasting. For example, when a midwife made a traditional "grandmother's" porridge after baptism for all the relatives and invited guests it was eaten without milk and butter (REM fond 7, list 1, file 1725, sheets 4, 10).

In the central part of the country bread, boiled and fresh vegetables were more common. The first dishes were prepared with peas, haricot beans, lentils, mushrooms, onion. A famous dish was *tjurja* – first dish with water. Besides porridge made from oats or buckwheat, peasants prepared boiled and fried potatoes with oil butter as the second dishes. People liked to eat such fruits and berries as apples, cranberries, cowberries. The most favoured vegetables were turnips and swedes. Cabbage and cucumbers were salted.

In the North there was an obvious predominance of dishes made from oats. In Vologda province food made of oats was typical and oat flour was added to almost all dishes. The diet was poor as regards vegetables: only turnips, radishes, onions and garlic were used. At the same time much attention was paid to the provision of food by gathering wild plants and berries (Archives of Russian Geographical Society, fond 7, list 1, file 31, sheets 25–27, 29). On the table of the inhabitants of the Northern provinces berries and wild mushrooms were common, substituting not only for the absence of products containing meat and milk but also for a shortage of vitamins. If the fast was during the feast the menu varied and, for example, in Kadnikov district in spring and summer it included *ščee* with oat grain, soup with dried mushrooms without oats, black radish with kvass and green onions, pies. Rich peasants prepared a porridge with millet (it was a rare product) and ate it with vegetable oil made from the seeds of flax or hemp. Their supper included soup with dried mushrooms, radish, *tjapuška* – kvass with oat flour. During winter holidays the dinner included *ščee* with oat grain or fish soup, boiled peas, radish with kvass and onion with vegetable oil, fried mushrooms, cabbage with kvass, pies filled with fish, cowberries with oat flour. In summer the peasants ate the same dishes but instead of pies they ate kvass with oat flour (VORONINA 1992: 82–83; 2000: 170).

The table of fasting peasants in the Northern region of Russia also had its peculiarities although a large amount of rye bread was used there, too. A significant part in the food allowance of the inhabitants of Archangelsk province for example consisted of turnips and radishes that were prepared with oil butter made from hemp-seed (DURASOV 1986: 85). For the people who lived on the coast of the White Sea, fish was the “daily bread” which distinguished their ration from that of the inhabitants of other Northern provinces with an agricultural orientation. It is natural that during the fasts the inhabitants of the coast ate fish except on those days when it was not allowed, especially during Lent and the Feast of the Dormition (BERNŠTAM 1983: 69–70).

Favourable geographical conditions in the South made it possible to cultivate more vegetables and fruits, and the food ration during fasts was richer.

In Rjazan, Voronež and other provinces towards the South, mostly soup made of sauerkraut (*šči*) or *boršč* with cabbage and dishes with potatoes were cooked. Porridge made from millet was a favourite. Also, the people there ate more vegetables and fruits. They used more red-beets than in the Northern provinces and prepared the first dish – *ščee* with salted red-beets; they cultivated melon, musk-melon, cherries, apples, plums, apricots and other cultures. Food was prepared on sunflower-seed oil. Mushrooms and wild berries were also included in the food allowance. Porridge was also made with hemp-seed oil. One of the favourite dishes during feasts was baked or stewed pastry with the berries of the snow-ball-tree (guelder rose) – it was called *kulaga*. Another dish was made from oat flour mixed with kvass or hemp-seed oil (MALYHIN 1853: 211).

The peasants who refrained from certain types of food during the fasts had the label non-fast or *skoromnoe* (“forbidden”, “unlawful”) on their domestic utensils. In almost every village a hostess considered it her duty to have “fast” tableware – pots, bowls, spoons which were used only during the fasting days (REM list 1, file 376, sheets 9–10; file 339, sheet 47; file 583, sheet 4; file 211, sheet 145; file 220, sheets 23–24).

Russians who were resettled to Siberia adapted themselves in the new environment but kept their traditional culture. No wonder that there were many peasants from the European part of Russia by birth and they continued to keep fasts as they did before. Besides traditional dishes they ate fresh wild plants, especially ramsons (in Russian – *čeremša*), or salted them. Siberia was always rich in fish which is why fish was used for first and second dishes and also for pies as a filling.

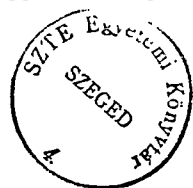
The materials of the Russian Geographical Society described the food ration of the peasants of Eastern Siberia. Their everyday meals included *ščĭ* with cabbage and barley, soup with potatoes, porridge from millet or barley with hemp-seed oil or oil made from cedar oil, wild plants *ryžšyk* and also with fish oil (not only cod-liver oil as it was common in the North), soup with turnips and poppy-seeds, soup with carrots, salted red-beet, boiled peas. When the fasts were on feasts, the food ration included more fish dishes and pies with fish. Pancakes (*bliny*) with mushrooms were also a favourite dish (GROMYKO 1973: 155–158). In the Altai region the food was the same but included noodle soup, soup with dried fish and more dishes with pies (LIPINSKAJA 1987: 180, 188).

The practice of fasting also affected the process of children's socialization. In every family the customs of fasting were passed on from one generation to the next. But in the case of nutrition during fasting, there was a differentiation even within one family. Elderly people were the authority in the practice of fasting and kept to stricter abstention in every respect. The parents played a special role but first of all the mother was the one who fasted more than the others and gave a personal example of pious behaviour. Children were trained to fast from early childhood. Some peasants thought that fasting was not obligatory only for children of seven or eight years of age but also for children of four years who should begin fasting following the example of adults.

In Tver province food containing meat or milk products was not consumed by children either. In Kostroma province children of two or three years fasted. In Ryazan province the breastfeeding of infants was not counted by weeks and months but by fasts. Infants were usually fed during three fasts: two Lents and the Fast of the Dormition, or two Fast of the Dormition and one Lent – depending on when the child was born. Children who were no longer breastfed shared food with the adults during the fasts (REM list 1, file 583, sheet 4; file 1725, sheet 4).

In other districts of the same province children were given milk during three fasts, then the feeding stopped. When they reached the age of three, children did not eat milk products during fasts, they were given rye bread with soup without meat, porridge with vegetable oil and potatoes; sometimes they were given ring-shaped rolls or *baranki* (REM list 1, file 1438, sheet 4). From that age on the children's food was the same as that of the grown-ups. If a child was weak and could not bear the difficulties of fasting, its mother fasted for it (REM list 1, file 1440, sheet 24).

Thus, beginning from childhood the fasts promoted the development of qualities such as temperance, the ability to control one's desires and feelings, and to act in accordance with the norms of behaviour accepted in a certain community. Fasting was one of the forms of children's socialization in the society. Strict fasting in the peasants' environment was observed by many correspondents of Tenišev's Bureau. In Kostroma province the peasants never let themselves break fast, for example to eat an egg. In their opin-



ion to break fast was a great sin. Non-fasting people were talked about as apostates: "Look at him! He gorges on beef during fasts!" (REM list 1, file 603, sheet 32).

The peasants did not break fast even when they were ill. They thought that "light" attention towards fasts was peculiar to the noble and educated people: "Only peasants can fast but the learned and high-minded persons cannot live a day without tea and beef!" (REM List 1, file 339, sheet 47; file 376, sheets 9–10, 16–18). The peasants were amazed when during Lent they saw how rich people ate meat in the town: "We do not believe that people cannot keep fasts!" (ZOBININ 1894: 42–43).

While fasting the peasants did not give food containing meat or milk products even to passers-by. People were afraid when they saw someone eat non-fast food during a fast. Exceptions were only made for non-Orthodox persons, for instance Gypsies and Tatars but in such cases the tableware from which they ate was considered to be profaned and the peasants did not use them till "the spirit of Tatar lost its smell" (REM list 1, file 376, sheets 9–10).

These examples show that in the practice of abstention from food containing meat or milk the peasants showed moral condemnation of deviation from fasting by the representatives of other social strata. This is expressed in the peasants' critical attitude to intellectuals and people of other confessions.

The peasants tried to attend church because in every parish there were special books – "Confessional books" – in which priests wrote the data of people who did not confess and take communion that was usually done during Lent and other fasts. (The decree about the necessity to confess was in force till 1917). It was also necessary to fast and confess before marriage in the church.

It is worth noting that the attitude to the peasants who did not fast was negative. Even when somebody was presented at the court he could not give evidence if he did not fast. In judicial practice a deviation from confession was considered as aggravating circumstances (BORISOVA 1997: 31–32).

2. PUBLIC AND INDIVIDUAL FASTS

Besides the fasts lasting for many days and the fasts of one day established by the Russian Orthodox Church there were other fasts that were widely observed up to the beginning of the 20th century. First of all there were so-called "public" fasts that were kept by all Russians or by all members of a town or village community. Disasters such as epidemics and epizootics, drought, long periods of rain, etc. were the main reasons for keeping public fasts. People kept such fasts on the permission of the priest after the local peasants' community decided to fast.

Many people kept "individual" fasts that, as a rule, were dedicated to the holidays of the Church calendar to commemorate the famous saints. Fasting on these days could give a definite grace and help in a concrete situation.

In Vologda province where the peasants worshipped St. Procopius of Ustjug (died: 1303) they kept the fast of St. Procopius for a week before his commemoration day (July 8 / July 21). Some of them did not make a break after the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul the

Apostles (June 29 / July 12) which ended the Peter's Fast, extending fasting until the Feast of St. Procopius (ŠLJAPIN 1903: 8).

In Vjatka province the peasants kept John's Fast: they did not eat any food containing meat or milk products during the week before the day of the Beheading of St. John the Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord – the peasants called him Fast John and then fasted on the Feast (August 29 / September 11) (REM list 1, file 231, sheet 7; file 339, sheet 43).

In Rjazan province some peasants did not break fast after the end of the Fast of the Dormition (August 15 / August 28) and kept fasting until the 29th of August (SELIVANOV 1987: 76).

According to a correspondent of Tenišev's Bureau, in Vjatka province a large number of peasants also fasted before August 29 – not immediately after the Fast of the Dormition but a week before the feast – "John's week"; in addition they did not eat meat a day before August 29 because it was *zagoven'e* – a preparation before a feast (REM list 1, file 1, sheet 16).

In the same province the peasants had the one-day Fast of St. Michael the Archangel (November 8 / November 21) to please him because as they thought the Archangel would be present at the Last Judgment (REM list 1, file 440, sheet 15).

In Tambov province on the commemoration day of St. Mary of Egypt (April 1 / April 14) it was considered a sin to eat anything except cabbage soup but without meat. In Vladimir province the peasants fasted during that day in the hope of a good harvest. In Kostroma province people fasted on the Feast of the Kazan Icon of Our Lady (October 22 / November 4) (REM list 1, file 29, sheets 37–40; file 583, sheet 4).

Some girls who wanted to marry took extra fasts on the eve of the Feast of St. Catherine (November 24 / December 7) and also before the Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle (November 30 / December 13) (KALINSKIJ 1877: 323).

Among the individual fasts, the fast on Mondays or the Archangel's Fast had a special place. Many peasants did not eat anything during that day and drank only water, as it was customary in monasteries. Women fasted on Mondays more often than the others. For them this fasting had a particular meaning: they fasted for children, especially in connection with particular circumstances in their life. In Kaluga province in families where children often died their mothers made a vow to fast on Mondays so that the children would live; besides they did not eat food containing meat or milk products even on usual days (REM list 1, file 540, sheet 4a).

In the same province the midwives kept fast on Mondays as well "to make their hands lighter during a childbirth". A correspondent of Tenišev's Bureau noted an occasion where a midwife practicing successfully in the local area forgot about the fast and ate meat on Monday. As a result she was not invited to the women in childbirth and very soon she lost her practice altogether (REM list 1, file 540, sheet 5).

The fasts on Mondays were kept by girls who refused to marry and kept a monastic way of life although they did not enter a monastery. People called them *kelejnic*, *čer-ničky* because sometimes they lived in a separate small house that was built near their parents' house, for instance, in the backyard or in the kitchen garden (TULTSEVA 1970: 64).

A correspondent of Tenišev's Bureau wrote that some of these girls could not marry and living in the family they did any work, prayed zealously and went to church, read the Psalter (psalm book) for the deceased and always kept the fasts (REM list 1, file 1465, sheets 10–11).

Some peasants of Vjatka province did not eat food containing meat or milk products at all or they limited their consumption of meat, milk, eggs and fish, ate food without any butter (or even vegetable oil) for several years before their death. They did not drink wine, refrained from smoking, made a vow never to eat apples, potatoes, or drink kvass. The peasants were sure that those people who had had the sacrament of extreme unction in the case of near death were forbidden to eat meat during the rest of their lives. Some people after taking the extreme unction did not eat meat for forty days. Some elderly people refused to eat meat and meat products "for saving the soul". In Rjazan province many dying men refused to eat food containing meat or milk products during the fasts despite the doctor's advice because they had had a sacrament of the extreme unction and they were afraid to break it. In Kaluga province the peasants made a vow to keep fasts on Mondays starting from the age of fifty (REM list 1, file 345, sheet 10; file 342, sheet 44; file 441, sheet 5; file 540, sheet 4a).

"Vow fasting" or "promised fasts" are connected with the individual fasts but it is difficult to define a clear border between them because they are very much alike in their meaning.

Apart from the fasts on Fridays established by the Orthodox Church there were the Twelve Temporary Fridays, Vow or Big Fridays that were very popular among Russians.

Fasting on Fridays was in a very close connection with a well-known practice of the amuletic use of the texts that was widespread in many cultures. The texts about the Twelve Fridays in Russia were also used for magical purposes and were worn on the body and were used as amulets. But it is not right to see only a magic meaning of such texts (RYAN 1999: 293, 301–302).

The worshipping of these Fridays was spread in the form of manuscript copies, apocrypha, spiritual songs (VESELOVSKIJ 1876: 317, 349). In the 19th century the texts of the Twelve Fridays could be found in Novgorod, Kursk, Kaluga, Jaroslavl', Voronež and other provinces.

As P. I. Gundobin wrote in 1862, women in Vladimir province (Šuja district) kept all the fasts very strictly. Most of them fasted and did not eat even bread and water on the days before the main feasts but also on Twelve Temporary Fridays. Each Friday had a special name and was dedicated to the main feasts of the Church calendar. People fasted on Fridays before these holidays. In different parts of Russia the names of Fridays varied but the most important were the following: before the Holy Epiphany, Shrovetide, the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple, the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, Easter, Pentecost, the Feast of St. Elijah, the Dormition, the Feast of St. John the Baptist, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the Nativity of Our Lord (GUNDOBIN 1862: 44–48).

Every Friday had a special grace and promised special preferences. A renowned ethnologist N. A. Ivanickij published the text *On Holding Sacred Big Fridays during a Year*

(2 variants) that he found in Vologda province. According to this text (the second variant is given in brackets):

The First Friday is on the first week of Lent. Those who respect (keep fast on) this Friday will be saved from troubles.

The Second Friday is before the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin. Those who keep fast on this Friday will be saved from the devil (or from a murder).

The Third Friday is on the Holy Week before Easter. Those who keep fast on this Friday will be saved from enemies (sufferings).

The Fourth Friday is before the Ascension Day. Those who keep this Friday will be saved from sinking (in water).

The Fifth Friday is before Whit Monday. Those who keep this Friday will be saved from (rid of) a sword.

The Sixth Friday is before the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. Those who keep this Friday will be saved from scarcity (lack and scarcity).

The Seventh Friday is before the day of St. Elijah. Those who keep this Friday will be saved from the torments (or from fire and sword).

The Eighth Friday is before the Dormition. Those who keep this Friday will be saved from any confusion.

The Ninth Friday is before the day of Sts. Cosma and Damian. Those who keep this Friday will be saved from any attack (or any sin).

The Tenth Friday is before the day of St. Archangel Michael. Those who keep this Friday will be written in Our Virgin's book (or saved from fatal sickness).

The Eleventh Friday is before Christmas. Those who keep this Friday will see Our Virgin before their death.

The Twelfth Friday is before the Holy Epiphany. Those who keep this Friday will be written in the book of Our Saviour (will be written in the Animal's book) (IVANICKIJ 1890: 144–145).

The texts of the story about the Twelve Fridays were sold by peddlers in villages all over Russia.

Another set of sacred Fridays was in use under the name of Vow Fridays. People made a vow to fast in the third week of Lent, in the Holy Week, on the first of August and other days.

Peasants kept fasts on these days to prevent such unexpected misfortunes as drought, bad harvest, epizootics, appearance of pests on cereals, serious diseases, etc.

It is important to underline a special worship in Russia of Saint Elijah whose memory was celebrated on July 20 and Friday before the Feast. The peasants did not work during the feast. In many provinces they fasted all week and especially on Friday to revere his memory (GLUŠKOV 1862: 74–75).

The individual fasts in various forms and degrees of strictness essentially add to the system of fasts established by the Church and on the whole can be considered as a manifestation of the peasants' piety. Nevertheless the sources demonstrate that at the end of the 19th century the fasts were treated more indulgently. This happened because more peasants were involved in a wide circle of social ties. Undoubtedly, leaving home in search of possibilities to earn a living in the cities influenced the practice of fasting, later

migration was on a mass scale. Service in the armed forces also had an effect on the strictness of the fasts. Returning home after their long absence, some of the former soldiers did not keep all the fasts and their attitude to the people who fasted was sceptical.

In accordance with the canons of the Church one was supposed to go to Communion during all four long fasts but at the end of the 19th century peasants did it twice a year: during Lent and the Fast of the Dormition, or during the Fast of the Holy Apostles and the Fast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ. The most pious believers did it more often.

*

On the whole the sources analyzed show that at the end of the 19th century the fasts played an important role in the life of Russian peasants. The strict observation of the traditions testifies to the high level of the peasants' religiosity and remained remarkable examples of piety.

The traditional diet of Russians in the 19th century was a wholesome and stable complex of nutrition, which included fast days set apart for partial or complete abstinence from food during a calendar year. Fasting food varied in different parts of the country. During feasts the food allowance became richer. The importance of fast days was not only in their restricting the diet to certain sets of food products, they served also to consolidate the norms of morality, to foster positive qualities and the like. Fasting habits and customs were passed down from one generation to the next, and thus carried a great educational content. The most important was the fact that the majority of the population kept fasts.

THE PRACTICE OF FASTS IN THE 20th CENTURY

The beginning of the 20th century was marked by different changes including the revolution in 1905 and especially the First World War (1914–1918) that shook the country to its foundation and the nutrition worsened. But information about fasting in Russia before 1917 shows that following all the fasts was considered to be an important condition and evidence of purity of Christian faith. A demonstration of that was the All-Russian fast kept on August 26–29, 1915 in the difficult years of the First World War and which continued the tradition of “public” fasts. At the same time it must be said that the neglect of fasting, especially in the educated strata of the population, was one of the signs of a lowering in the level of religiosity.

In February 1917 fateful events took place: the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The life began to change radically; evidence of the beginning of secularization of the state can be seen in the Decree of the Soviet Government on “The Separation of Church from State and School from Church” dated January 25 / February 5, 1918. This marked the beginning of the persecutions of clergy and people who sympathized with them.

This is confirmed by the compilation of biographies of ascetics, based on documents kept in the archives of the KGB and local archives. Many of those who were thrown into jail stayed faithful to Church vows and kept fasts.

The summer of 1919 was very dry in Central Russia, especially in the South, throughout Ukraine. There was a lack of bread and people were hungry. In Moscow there were religious processions with crosses from all the temples to the Red Square to pray for rain. The Church declared an All-Russian public fast which was the last one during the Soviet regime.

The first years of the new government were followed by a restriction of the activity of the Russian Orthodox Church; this was manifested especially in the closing and destruction of the churches, persecution and punishment of the faithful. The anti-religious propaganda, later called “atheistic education”, played a great role. The liquidation of the faith by any methods became the strategic line of the new regime.

In the Soviet period Orthodoxy ceased to be the state religion after the political and ideological reforms, but the attitude to religion did not change at once. Moreover, the regional differences in food allowance during fasts remained. Usual fasting food included mainly rye bread, *pirogy* without filling, *ščee* from cabbage without spices, pottage from potato and millet, millet porridge, potatoes without butter. Holiday fasting food was the same, but included onions and hemp-seed oil. Among drinks, kvass was the most widespread; tea was more seldom consumed, infusions of different dried herbs were made.

In the 1920s mass inspections were made in several provinces of Central Russia, which showed a high level of religiosity and, in particular, fasting everywhere.

Inspections of the villages in Kursk province in 1917, 1920 and 1923 showed that peasants continued to keep fasts (JAKOVLEV 1923, 1925). Research in the other provinces also showed that though the difficulties of the time after the First World War adversely affected attendance at churches, faith remained strong among the people. Even young people who had left their native places to go on military service and later returned continued to keep fasts.

The Civil War (1918–1920) in the country brought serious changes to agriculture and it became difficult to keep fasts. Almost everywhere the areas under crops declined, often insufficient areas were sown and the overall crop structure changed. The organization of kolkhozes accompanied by liquidation of private economies aggravated the situation. The observations of the Central Statistics Board in Vjatka province in the 1920s made with the aim of studying urban and village nutrition did not give comforting results. Because of bad harvests and the lack of bread, nutrition deteriorated: people ate chaff, bark, oil-cakes, even clay. And in such a situation the report that the peasants following tradition did not eat food containing meat and milk was very astonishing. It can be seen from the inspection in March 1923 that this was during Lent (PERFIL'EV 1923: 24–30).

The same information is found in the State archive of Vologda province containing information about a situation in the countryside. The answers to questions on forms of the Vologda Society for Study of the Northern Land (VOISK) in 1927 showed that despite the deterioration of the food supply people kept fasts (State Archives of Vologda Province, fond 4389, list 1, files 144, 146, 149, 208, 218).

Information about fasting in the 1920s is available in the answers to a questionnaire of the former Rjazan Province Archives Commission concerning the names and composition of dishes and drinks on meat days and days of fasts. The everyday diet included rye

bread, rye pies, *ščee* with cabbage, soup with potatoes and millet, porridge made from millet, boiled and baked potatoes without oil. Festive food during fasts was the same but it was prepared with oil. People drank tea and kvass but also used wild plants like St. John's wort (Archives of Rjazan Historic Architecture Museum, files 3, 5, 16, 21, 878, 2510).

Following the tradition, during fasts and especially Lent, people abstained from songs and dances, even at youth gatherings.

The results of the ethnological observations in 1919–1925 in Central Russia noted that the traditional customs and rites including fasting were still alive but at the same time a changing attitude to fasts and holidays was noted. An ethnologist D. A. Zolotarev wrote: "Often during fast *skoromnoe* is eaten, and people work on holidays" (ZOLOTAREV 1926: 151–153).

The atheistic propaganda gradually changed the attitude of many people to the Church: believers declined to demonstrate their former religious views openly. Young people were drawn into political actions against the faith and changed the most; an agitation for the complete rejection of religion was done very actively among them. Already in 1923 the Union of Atheists recognized as successful the first experience of mass anti-religious holidays – "Komsomol Christmas" – and considered it fit for use by Komsomol organizations in Western Europe; it inspired the organizers to hold a "Komsomol Easter" (KONONVIČ 1990: 38).

In the 1920s all the activity of the magazines *Bezbožnik* or *Ateist* was directed at the eradication of the age-old traditional customs and rites. That is why, for example, they ridiculed the rite for the sanctification not only of Easter cakes and eggs, but also of seeds before sowing. The rite of fasting was ridiculed too. This was reflected in the articles that criticized people who kept fasts. The anti-religious propaganda was conducted in the sharpest forms. In the introductory article in *Ateist* a slogan was given openly: "Down with the Easter moods of the priests, long live May Day!" But the publications often refuted imaginary victories of atheists and it was noted that during Lent believers continued to fast (*Bezbožnik* ("Atheist"), 1925, № 4, 15; 1926, № 8, 1–3; 1926, № 12, 12).

In resolutions of the Communist party congresses, the appeals for the elimination of religious prejudices became increasingly strident because the level of religiosity was still high, especially among women. In the atheistic literature the "harmful" influence of faith on working women was noted: they baptized their children, went to church, performed all the Church rites, etc. There were many believers in Moscow too (FEDOROV 1926: 5, 14, 30).

It was true that not all the young people kept fasts as their parents did, but there were many places where the population followed all the instructions. For example, a correspondent of the magazine *Bezbožnik* wrote that in the villages of Brjansk province old and young people fasted, but at the same time young people did not always go to church, did not get married in church but held a "red" baptism, that is without a priest. On church holidays during thanksgiving service by the priest, posters were put up on some of the houses in the village: "No entrance for priests!" (*Bezbožnik*, 1927, № 10, 4–6; 1929, № 3, 6).

In 1929 a forced mass collectivization began, accompanied by arrests and the dispatch of thousands of people to jails and concentration camps (GULAG). The order was given to make extensive use of administrative and repressive measures in the struggle

against religion. Many churches had already been closed, but now the mass closure of churches began. It became dangerous to keep fasts in such a situation. Nevertheless, field materials provide evidence that fasts were kept but not so openly as before.

Many of our contemporaries were involuntary witnesses of those years and could tell about the closing and destruction of churches and the persecution of people for their faith. But in this situation people tried to follow the Church Statute. Conversations with the citizens of various provinces showed that believers continued fasting even in such hard conditions. One of the women born in 1900 in Tambov province said that she continued to follow all the Church statutes. In 1928 she was pregnant: "Nobody forced me to fast but in our family there was a strict order to fast from childhood. We knew that on Christmas Eve we can eat only when the first star appears in the sky. Or on the eve of Holy Epiphany water in the church was consecrated and taken home, so the strict fasting ended and we could eat everything."

In the Soviet press we can find many examples of a counteraction to the repressive measures. Some of the victims are still alive and stay as witnesses. Thanks to them and also to those who were rehabilitated posthumously but left their memoirs, it is known that those years are possibly the most terrible and cruel in Russian history. Many people were dismissed from work for their religious beliefs and those who stayed at work hid their beliefs carefully which is why there was no talk about fasts, people could talk about it only in the close circle of believers. An open demonstration of keeping the Church statutes brought punishment of various kinds, the reason why those who kept the practice of fasting did so secretly. In extreme conditions, in the camps, it was not possible to eat only vegetable food: according to the concentration camp norms people were given 100 grams of rye bread and soup made of dried fish (European smelt, sparring, snetok) or herring, and 2 cups of water a day. But even here people found the strength to confess and to celebrate Easter (NIKIFOROV-VOLGIN 1982: 158).

In the press there was information about the level of religiosity in the army. An investigation conducted in the army found: 49% believers, 22% hesitating, 29% non-believers (*Antireligioznik*, 1931, № 1, 60).

In the 1930s the attitude of the state to the Church worsened because the Union of Militant Atheists adopted a plan known as the "Atheistic Five-year Plan" (1932–1937). Extensive propaganda was conducted in the schools. The atheistic literature was added to the mass media. Many people were imprisoned but even there they tried to keep fasts. A citizen of Moscow said that he was in the camps from 1941 till 1956 and tried to keep fast during Lent.

It is a well-known fact that the Second World War (1941–1945) was very difficult and many people were very hungry. Those who are still alive remember that they ate rye bread, potatoes, porridge and very often nothing. So keeping fasts was rather difficult.

There was atheistic propaganda after the War in the 1950s and the fasts were said to be prejudices (BELJAEV 1958: 23). People did not dare to attend the churches. The results of interviewing old people showed that many believers followed the Church instructions and fasted. But almost all of them did not tell even their relatives or friends about this. In their stories they often said "It was during Lent..." or "Before Christmas our family went..." with orientation on the fasts or feasts.

At the same time there were many non-formal confessional communities headed by elderly men or nuns who helped people to withstand all the difficulties during the persecution of the faith. Among them was St. Matrona (1881–1952) who helped many people and advised them to keep fasts (she was canonized in 2000). Among the advice she gave was not to marry during fasts and she prayed for those who broke this rule (ŽDANOVA 1993: 27–28).

In the 1960s and 1970s people were still punished for every manifestation of their beliefs.

The situation improved in 1988 – the year of the Millennium of Christianity in Russia. The last decade of the 20th century was marked by the reconstruction of many ruined churches and the growth of parishes. The activity of the Church became legal and people began to attend churches and follow the religious instructions in an open form. The results of sociological studies at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s showed a growth in the number of believers.

The Church Statute is still canonical so people keep the same long fasts and one-day fasts. The answers given by citizens of various provinces showed that most believers try to fast at Lent but more of them prefer to keep fasts during the first week of Lent and Holy week.

As to the nutrition during fasts, it is important to note that it still includes a lot of bread and bakery products, porridges made not only with oats and buckwheat but also with rice, boiled and fried potatoes, fruits and vegetables, stewed fruit, kvass. The menu during different seasons varies: for example, in summer it includes soup with fish, *ščee* with fresh cabbage, fresh or new boiled and fried potatoes, vegetable marrow, fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, salads, fresh mushrooms, berries; in winter it includes *ščee* with salted cabbage, potatoes with salted cabbage, mushrooms, cucumbers. Now everybody drinks tea and coffee during fasts.

An ordinary menu during the fast of the Dormition in August can include as first dish – soup with fresh mushrooms, potatoes and green onion, as second dish – fresh boiled potatoes and salad with tomatoes and cucumbers, and as third dish – stewed fruit or tea with jam.

The innovations in the food allowance are connected with the wide spread of new ways of preserving and pickling. Vegetables or fruits are put in glass jars with hot water where they are sterilized for more than an hour and closed with a metal cover. The salads with a mixture of vegetables are preferred because during cold periods it is easy to prepare food from a combination of potatoes or porridges with preserves. The food allowance now includes more salads with tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, pepper, different jams, etc. than at the beginning of the 20th century. The menu is more varied in Moscow, St. Petersburg and big cities but in the provinces one could see a lack of food products. Moreover, the early 1990s were marked by a difficult economic situation and many people had serious livelihood problems because of their low salaries.

The role of women who were responsible for the preparation of food has changed and now they are often as busy as men. That is why women prefer to buy prepared food in the shops. During the 20th century the variety of national products was gradually increased at the expense of imported products. The lack of vegetables and fruits in the 1990s was made up by products brought from other countries. At the same time such a

situation is more common for big cities, but in the provinces people do not have the possibility to use the benefits of civilization: their food allowance during fasts is limited.

The regional differences are still present in the menu during fasts. For example, in Voronezh province to the South of Moscow one could easily find many Ukrainian components in everyday meals.

The church is attended not only by old and elderly people but also by young people. The results of interviewing people in Dubna (Moscow province) showed that the composition of the menu at the local university changes at the beginning of Lent and includes a special part under the title "Special menu" with a suggestion of various dishes mostly with salads, vegetables and fruits.

A new feature was that many articles in the newspapers and advertisements on TV began to give information about the dates, length and kind of nutrition during fasts. The number of books about fasts greatly increased because people are interested to know the peculiarities of food allowances during fasting. That is why books with recipes describing how to prepare dishes are very popular (VORONINA 2004: X). At the same time many people interpret the fasts in the wrong way – as a means of improving their health – taking into consideration only the physical meaning of fasts.

It is interesting to note that the tradition of keeping individual fasts is still alive. People continue to fast on Mondays, a practice that is known as the "fast for children" because in this way women try to help their children. Women who had an abortion in the past that is considered to be a sin fast on Monday.

More people are now married in the church. But in accordance with the Statute, it is forbidden to do this during fasts. The workers of the registry offices (ZAGS) in many regions, including Rjazan province, remarked that young people are trying to follow the prescriptions of old people who say that the life of a couple who married during fasts will be unhappy.

On the whole the conditions of contemporary life differ from those in the 19th and early 20th century and that is why the practical realization of fasts is difficult; it cannot always be reconstructed in traditional forms. The way of life, material and spiritual values have also changed. But in comparison with the atheistic period when people fasted secretly, believers are beginning to follow the religious prescriptions and to fast openly.

On the whole religiosity has increased, taking into account other manifestations of the faith, and fast days play a great role in the life of Russians.

LITERATURE

BEJAEV, K. I.

1958: Беляев, К. И.: *Религия и повседневная жизнь* [Religion and Everyday Life]. Москва.

BERNŠTAM, Tatjana A.

1983: Бернштам, Татьяна А.: *Русская народная культура Поморья в 19 и начале 20 века* [Russian Folk Culture of Pomorye in the 19th and early 20th Century]. Ленинград, "Наука".

BORISOVA, A. V.

1997: Борисова, А. В.: *Морально-этические нормы и чувство ответственности государственных крестьян Ярославской губернии в первой половине 19 века* [Moral-ethic Norms and Sense of Justice of the State Peasants of Jaroslavl Province in the First Half of the 19th Century]. [В: *Путь в науку* [A Way to Science]. Ярославль. Выпуск 3.

DURASOV, G. P.

- 1986: Дурасов, Г. П.: Пища населения Каргополя (по материалам 19–20 вв.) [The Nutrition of the Population in Kargopolye (On the Materials of the 19th–20th Centuries)]. В: *Советская этнография*. Москва. № 6.

FEDOROV, E. F.

- 1926: *Anti-religious Propaganda in the Workers' Clubs*. Moscow.

GLUŠKOV, I.

- 1862: Глушков, И.: Топографическо-статистическое описание города Котельнича [Topographical-Statistical and Ethnographical Description of the Town of Kotelnich]. В: *Этнографические очерки*. Выпуск 5. Санкт-Петербург.

GROMYKO, Marina M.

- 1973: Громыко, Марина М.: Новые данные по материальной культуре русских крестьян Каинского уезда в 1840-е годы [New Data on the Material Culture of Russian Peasants of Kain District in the 1840s]. В: *Известия Новосибирского отделения Географического общества СССР*. Новосибирск. Выпуск 6.

- 1986: Традиционные нормы поведения и формы общения русских крестьян в 19 веке [The Traditional Norms of Behaviour and the Forms of Intercourse of the Russian Peasants in the 19th Century]. Москва, "Наука".

- 1999: Этнографическое изучение православной жизни русских в 20 веке (Обзор основных тенденций) [An Ethnographical Study of Orthodox Life of Russians in the 20th Century (A Review of the Main Tendencies)]. В: *Исторический вестник*. № 1, 8–9.

GUNDOBIN, P. I.

- 1862: Гундобин, П. И.: Черты религиозности [The Features of Religiosity]. В: *Этнографические очерки (Русское Географическое общество)* [Ethnographical Collected Works (Russian Geographical Society)]. Выпуск 5. Санкт-Петербург.

IVANICKIJ, N. A.

- 1890: Иванецкий, Н. А.: Материалы по этнографии Вологодской губернии [Materials on the Ethnography of Vologda Province]. В: *Известия Общества любителей естественной истории, археологии, этнографии* [News of the Society of Amateurs of Natural History, Archeology, Ethnography]. Том LXIX. Москва.

JAKOVLEV, I. A.

- 1923: Яковлев, И. А.: *Деревня как она есть (заметки о Никольском уезде)* [A Village as It Is (Notes about Nikolsky District)]. Москва.

- 1925: *Наши деревня. Новое в старом и старое в новом* [Our Village. New in Old and Old in New]. Москва–Ленинград.

KALINSKIJ, I. A.

- 1877: Калининский, И. А.: Народный ежемесячный церковный календарь в России [A Folk Monthly Church Calendar in Russia]. В: *Записки Императорского Русского Географического общества (этнографический отдел)* [Notes of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society (Ethnographical Department)]. Том 7. Санкт-Петербург.

KONONOVIC, A. A.

- 1990: Кононович, А. А.: *Праздники и обряды для сцены в СССР* [The Feasts and Rites Adapted for the Stage in the USSR]. Москва.

LEBEDEV, N.

- 1853: Лебедев, Н.: Образ жизни крестьян Тверского уезда Тверской губернии [A Way of Life of the Peasants in the Tver District of Tver Province]. В: *Этнографическое обозрение*. Выпуск 1. Санкт-Петербург.

LIPINSKAJA, Victoria A.

- 1987: Липинская, Виктория А.: *Русское население Алтайского края: Народные традиции в материальной культуре (18–20 вв.)* [The Russian Population of Altai Region: Folk Traditions in Material Culture (XVIII–XX c.)]. Москва.

- 1997: Пища (11–20 вв.). [Food (XI–XX c.)]. В: *Русские* [Russians]. Москва, "Наука".

MALYHIN, P.

- 1853: Малахихин, П.: Повседневная жизнь крестьян Воронежской губернии, Нижневичского уезда [An Everyday Life of Voronež Province, Nižnevitskij District]. В: *Этнографические очерки*. Санкт-Петербург. Выпуск 1.

NIKIFOROV-VOLGIN, V. A.

- 1982: Никифоров-Волгин, В. А.: *Дорожный посех. Избранное* [The Travelling Staff. Selected Works]. Москва.

PERFILJEV, B. N.

1923: Перфильев, Б. Н.: Питание сельского населения в Вятской губернии в 1921, 1922 и 1923. [Food Allowance of the Rural Population in Vjatka province in 1921, 1922 and 1923]. В: *Вятская жизнь*. № 5–6.

RYAN, W. F.

1999: *The Bathhouse: A Historical Survey of Magic and Divination in Russia*. London, Sutton Publishing.

SELIVANOV, V. V.

1987: Селиванов, В. В.: Год русского земледельца (Зарайский уезд, Рязанская губерния) [A Year of the Russian Farmer (Zarajskij district, Rjazan province)]. В: *Письма из деревни: Очерки о крестьянстве в России во второй половине 19 века*. [Letters from the Village: The Essays About the Peasantry in Russia in the Second Half of the 19th Century]. Москва, «Современник».

ŠLJAPIN, V.

1903: Шляпин, В.: *Житие святого Прокопия, Устюжского чудотворца, и историческое описание Устюжского Прокопьевского собора* [A Life of Saint Procopius, Miracle-worker of Ustjug, and Historical Description of Procopius Cathedral of Ustjug]. Санкт-Петербург.

TULCEVA, Ludmila A.

1970: Тульцева, Людмила А.: Чернички [Černičky]. В: *Наука и религия* [Science and Religion]. Москва. № 11.

VESELOVSKIJ, A.

1876: Веселовский, А.: Очерки по истории эволюции христианской легенды, часть 4: История о 12 пятницах [Essays on the History of the Evolution of the Christian Legend, part IV: A Story About 12 Fridays]. В: *Журнал Министерства народного просвещения* [A Magazine of the Ministry of Folk Population]. Часть 185, отдел 10.

VORONINA, Tatjana A.

1992: Воронина, Татьяна А.: Традиционное и современное питание русского населения Вологодской области [Traditional and Contemporary Nutrition of the Russian Population in Vologda Province]. В: *Русский Север: Ареалы и культурные традиции*. Ред. К. В. Чистов и Т. А. Бернштам. [Russian North: Areal and Cultural Traditions. Eds. K. V. Čistov, and T. A. Bernštam]. Санкт-Петербург, "Наука".

1997: Проблемы этнографического изучения русского православного поста [Problems of the Ethnographical Study of Russian Orthodox Fasts]. В: *Этнографическое обозрение*. Москва, № 4, 85–95.

1999: Russian Orthodox Fasts and the Peculiarities of Their Practice at the End of the 19th Century. In: *Studies in Folklore and Popular Religion*. Volume 3. Papers Delivered at the Symposium on Christian Folk Religion. Edited by Ulo Valk. Tartu, 73–86.

2000: Gathering as an Aspect of the Traditional Provision of Food in the Russian North. In: *Food from Nature: Attitudes, Strategies and Culinary Practice*. Edited by Patricia Lysaght, Uppsala, The Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture.

2004: *От поста к празднику: Советы благочестивой хозяйке* [From Fasting to Feasting. Advice to a Pious Housewife]. Москва.

ŽDANOVA, Z. V.

1993: Жданова, З. В.: *История о жизни Святой Матроны* [A Story About the Life of Saint Matrona]. Москва.

ZOBNNIN, F.

1894: Зобнин, Ф.: *Из года в год (описание жизни крестьян в деревне Усть-Ница, Тюменская губерния)* [From One Year to Another (A Description of the Peasants' Life in the village of Ust-Nica, Tumen Province)]. Санкт-Петербург. Выпуск 1.

ZOLOTAREV, D. A.

1926: Золотарев, Д. А.: Этнографические наблюдения в деревне РСФСР (1919–1925) [Ethnographical Observations in the Villages of RSFSR (1919–1925)]. В: *Материалы по этнографии*, этнографическое отделение Государственного Русского музея [Materials on Ethnography, Ethnographical Department of State Russian Museum]. Том 3, выпуск 1.



Fig. 1. Reading New Testament during Lent. On the table: white rosary, church calendar, a lightening candle, other church books. Moscow, 2002. All photos were made by Tatjana Voronina



Fig. 2. Blessing painted eggs and "kulich" (sweet bread with raisins), Holy Saturday in the church of Holy Trinity, in Konkovo, Moscow, 2003



Fig. 3. Visit or pilgrimage to Donskoj Monastery during Lent. Candle lightening near to the Donskaja Icon of Our Lady. Moscow, 2003



Fig. 4. A pilgrimage to the holy tree in Tolga women' monastery during the Fast of Assumption of Our Lady. Tolga Monastery, Jaroslavl province, 1999